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P 081510Z DEC 06  
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1596  
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 6370  
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 3694  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7563  
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 4814  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2066  
RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 0606  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 2139  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 3221  
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 1960  
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4264  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4703  
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 9288  
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 0924  
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 2091  
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL  
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC  
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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON SOFA NEGOTIATIONS

REF: LA PAZ 3229

Classified By: Ecopol Counselor Andrew Erickson for reasons 1.4 (a), (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) DCM met with Foreign Minister David Choquehuanca and Vice Minister Mauricio Dorfler November 27 to seek GOB input on the draft Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) we provided various GOB officials in late October. The Foreign Minister thanked the DCM for U.S. military assistance and appeared receptive to the idea of a new SOFA. Choquehuanca stated, however, that the draft's immunity provisions could be problematic since the GOB is currently evaluating the immunity of its own officials. He also questioned the entry of U.S. personnel into Bolivia without passports. Choquehuanca said if the SOFA's terms are similar to those of previous diplomatic notes, his work in getting the SOFA approved would be easier, but noted that the GOB (not the United States) should establish "the rules of the game." The Foreign Minister promised to consult with Defense Minister Walker San Miguel (who was scheduled to attend the meeting but did not) and Minister of the Presidency Juan de la Quintana regarding next steps. The DCM urged Choquehuanca to provide substantive comments on the draft SOFA as soon as possible; Choquehuanca acknowledged that the current agreement expires on December 31.

¶2. (C) DCM also met with Chamber of Deputies President Edmundo Novillo December 5 to explain the importance of a new SOFA. Novillo expressed keen interest in U.S. military humanitarian assistance, but said congress would defer to the executive branch about whether the GOB will move forward with an agreement. Novillo promised to encourage President Morales to make a decision.

¶3. (C) Comment: Key to our ability to move the ball forward with the GOB on the SOFA is the prospect of New Horizons. The GOB remains without a coherent policy on a SOFA, as we note from this and previous conversations we have had with senior leadership on this issue. This could redound to our

advantage as we use New Horizons as a carrot to coax the GOB in our direction. On November 29 (reftel) Vice President Garcia Linera told WHA PDAS Shapiro that he was willing to go before the legislature to defend U.S. military exercises in Bolivia. Without the incentive of New Horizons, this already-uphill battle will become more difficult. End comment.  
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